

A seven-legged araneid spider from Egypt (Araneida: Araneidae)

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Larinioides suspicax (O.P.-Cambridge, 1876) (Family Araneidae) is widely distributed from the Mediterranean countries to Central Asia (Platnick, 2002). In Egypt, it was recorded from: Alexandria, Damietta, El-Fayum, Rosetta, Siwa Oases, and Wadi Natron by different authors (El-Hennawy, 1990, 2002). The webs of this species were found among herbs and low plants especially in regions near water supplies and in marshes.

In 18 August 1980, in the region of El-Mazraa (31°29'58"N 31°48'30"E), about 400 m from the seashore, in Ras El-Barr (on the Mediterranean coast), a female spider of *L. suspicax* was found in her orbweb among herbs. She was with her newly hatched spiderlings. In captivity, she laid eggs, on 22 August, to get more spiderlings. The unusual and unexpected thing was that the mother had only three legs at the left side (Fig. 1). Leg III was not found in its normal position. It was not broken. There were only three coxae instead of four (Fig. 2). The spider had normal web and was sexually normal (to put eggs in nature and in captivity). All the spiderlings were normal eight-legged spiders to prove that this case of mutation was not inherited.

The following measurements (in millimetres) were provided to compare the left side legs with the right side legs. It was not possible to get more measurements without destructing hardened legs.

TL 11.985, Cephalothorax L 5.185 W 4.675, Abdomen L 6.8 mm

Femur length:	Leg	I	II	III	IV
	Right	4.845	4.250	2.975	3.995
	Left	4.845	4.250	-----	3.825

Leg IV	Femur	Patella	Tibia	Metatarsus	Tarsus	Total
Right	3.995	1.870	2.805	2.975	1.063	12.708
Left	3.825	2.125	2.805	2.975	1.063	12.793

This rare kind of anomaly reminds with the colour anomaly recorded by Yaginuma (1971). It is a wonderful case.

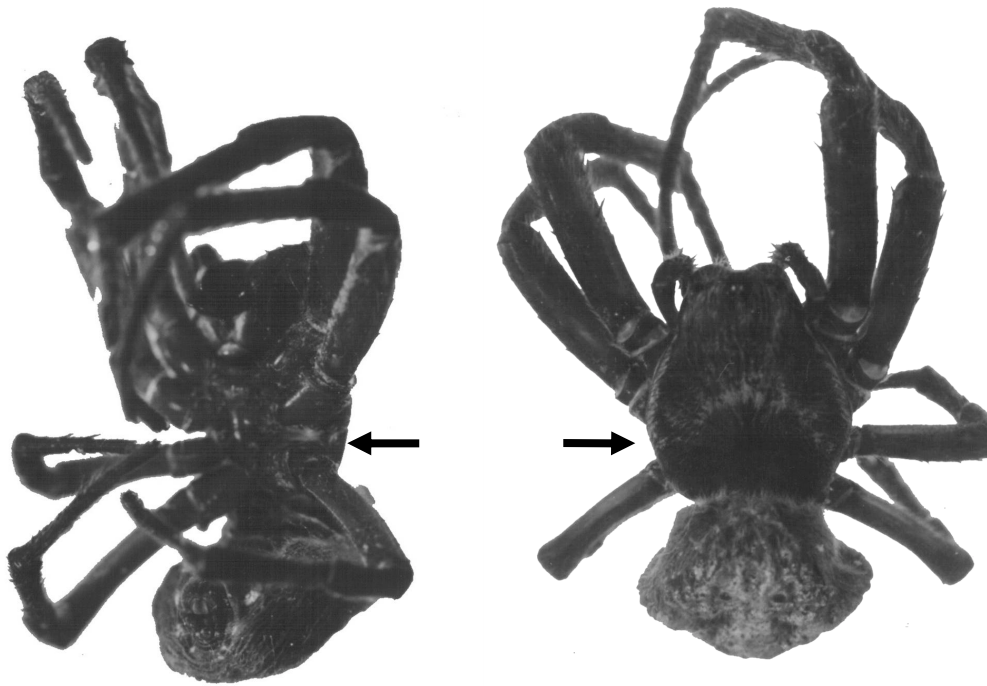


Figure 1. Seven-legged *Larinioides suspicax* female, dorsal view (right) and ventral view (left).

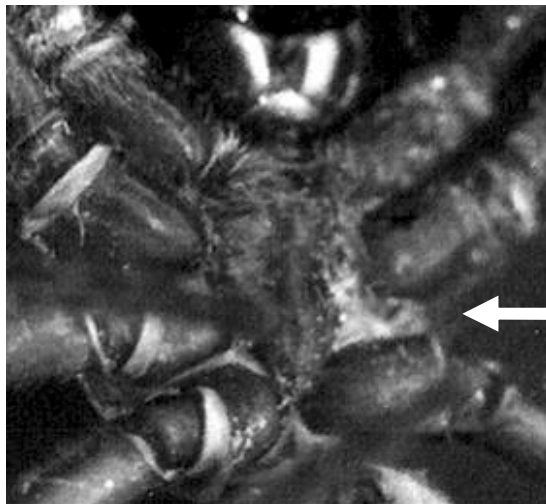


Figure 2. The seven-legged *Larinioides suspicax*. Coxae of legs (detail).
[The arrows point to the position of the unfound leg.]

References

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